

AAA Names Top National Parks for Great Spring Vacations

ORLANDO, Fla.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--April 15, 2004--With spring in full swing many Americans are planning to take a family vacation this season. According to AAA, the country's National Parks offer exciting experiences in all seasons, but knowing what time of year is best for which park is key.

AAA's National Park Photography, by noted nature photographer Tim Fitzharris, offers readers information on the best times to visit each of the 21 parks covered in the book including nine that are perfect for a springtime getaway.

-- Arches (Utah) boasts the largest concentration of natural stone arches in the world with more than 2000. In spring, temperatures are cooler and the landscape is decorated with wildflowers.

-- Big Bend (Texas) offers stunning scenery, gorgeous flora, several easily approached wildlife species, pleasant weather and no crowds except during holidays.

-- Canyonlands (Utah) has a diverse collection of landscape motifs. Deep canyons, staircase benchlands and soaring sandstone spires rival the Grand Canyon.

-- Everglades (Florida) is a birder's paradise with more than a dozen species of colorful, long-legged wading birds. Placid lakes, moss-draped forests and cypress swamps will appeal to landscape enthusiasts.

-- Great Smoky Mountains (Tennessee) offers mist-shrouded ridges with a great variety of plants, mammals and birds. In spring, old-growth, hardwood forests are ignited by color as hundreds of wildflower species decorate the forest floor.

-- Joshua Tree (California) is the meeting place of two desert ecosystems with a variety of opportunities for viewing plants and wildlife of arid habitats. Spring is a time of pleasant weather and beautiful wildflower displays.

-- Redwood (California) is a sliver of fog-shrouded wilderness that stretches along the coast. In addition to the towering redwoods, the park protects stream and river habitat and miles of surf-swept beaches.

-- Saguaro (Arizona) is home to forests of the enormous cacti that are its namesake. Unique textures, shapes and colors of many cacti species make them compelling subjects. In spring, their blooms spatter rock-cluttered slopes with brilliant color.

-- Yosemite (California) is an inspiring collection of landscape attractions including a huge glacier-carved corridor walled in by bare peaks and smooth domes which appear gold and bronze when reflecting the light of sunrise and sunset.

In addition to offering insight on the best seasons to visit each park, this unique travel guidebook has 250 full color photographs with locations and descriptions on how you can take each one, and a map that includes the location of "photo hot spots." These areas are identified by Fitzharris as some of the best places to capture breathtaking views. Access information and shooting tips are provided for each hot spot where necessary.

National Park Photography is available at AAA club offices, retail bookstores and www.aaa.com/barnesandnoble, and sells for \$24.95 US/\$37.95 CDN. For more information on travel to the national parks see www.aaa.com or visit your local AAA club office.

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